

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Claims 1-7 are rejected. Claims 8-21 have been objected to. Claim 1, 8-10, 14-16, and 20-21 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 8-21 are objected to as being in improper form. Claims 8-10, 14-16 and 20-21 have been amended to remove all multiple dependencies. Therefore, no multiple dependent claim serves as a basis for any other multiple dependent claim. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection and examination on the merits of claims 8-21 by the Examiner.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,112,667 to Li et al. (“Li”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,956,447 to Denommee et al. (“Denommee”). Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Li and Denommee does not disclose or suggest or all the features of the present invention.

Claim 1 recites “arranging the respective prepregs at predetermined portions of a press die using partially separated flaps of the prepregs as positioning pieces.” The Examiner acknowledges “Li et al. is silent to arranging the prepregs at predetermined portions of a press die using partially separated flaps.” However, the Examiner contends that “it would have been obvious . . . to have arranged the prepregs on a press die using any type of positioning methods as long as the prepregs are position on the press mold to achieve the desired structure of the molded article.” (Detailed Action, page 3.) Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s contentions and submit that it is impossible for an individual practicing the disclosure of Li to use the “separated flaps of the prepregs as positioning pieces.”

Li discloses that prepreg layers are “laid up” to form prepreg packets that are stacked and molded. (Li, col. 12, lines 13-17.) The packets are then “cut according to the design patterns show in Figs. 7 and 8,” (Li, col. 12, lines 17-20.) “The prepreg packets were then stacked. All odd number packets were cut according to Fig. 8 and even number packets according to Fig. 8 **so that the seams of adjacent packets would not overlap.**” (Li, col. 12, lines 17-30 (emphasis added).) In other words “[a]djoint packets formed into the shell have meridial cuts made at different locations on the patter to avoid overlapping of the seams of adjacent patterns.” (Li, col. 12, lines 61-53.)

Thus, Li explicitly teaches arranging the prepreg packets such that the seams of alternating layers are not in the same location. Because the seams are not in the same location, the partially separated flaps can not be used as position pieces, since the location of the flaps is not the same between layers.

Denommee similarly discloses superimposing star-shaped patterned layers of material such that “[t]he arms of the star shaped patterns are rotated in successive layers of the patterns so that partial overlapping occurs.” (Denommee col. 2, lines 57-60.) Thus, because each layer is rotated and placed in a different position, the arms of the star-shaped patterns of Denommee can be used as positioning pieces.

Claim 1 further recites “forming a second desired three-dimensional shape as a whole by overlapping end edge parts of residual portions on the partially separated flaps and pressing them.” The Examiner acknowledges that Li “is silent to overlapping end edge parts of residual portions on the partially separated flaps and pressing them.” (Detailed Action, page 3.) However, the Examiner contends that Denommee discloses this feature of claim 1. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As discussed above, Denommee discloses superimposing star-shaped patterned layers of material such that “[t]he arms of the star shaped patterns are rotated in successive layers of the patterns so that partial overlapping occurs.” (Denommee col. 2, lines 57-60.) The layers are tacked together and pressed for form the article. (Denommee, col. 2, line 67 – col. 3, line 15.) Thus, Denommee forms article with a single pressing.

In contrast, in accordance with claim 1, once the prepreg sheets are arranged using he partially separated flaps as positioning pieces, the prepreg sheets are pressed to form a first desired three-dimensional shape. The end edge parts of the sheets are then overlapped with the partially separated flaps and pressed again to form a second desired three-dimensional shape. Thus, claim 1 recites two pressing steps. Neither Denommee nor Li disclose forming the molded article through two pressings as recited by claim 1.

Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Li and Denommee. Claims 2-5 and 7 depend from claim 1. Thus, at least by virtue of their dependency, claims 2-5 and 7 are patentable over the combination of Li and Denommee.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Li et al. in view of Denommee et al. and in further view of Sakai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,990,207).

Claim 6 depends from claim 1. Applicants submit that Sakai fails to disclose those features of claim 1 demonstrated above to be missing from Li and Denommee. Therefore, at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1, claim 6 is patentable over the combination of Li, Denommee, and Sakai.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

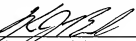
Claims 8-21 were not treated on the merits due to the Examiner's objections. (Detailed Action, item 3, page 2.) Applicants note that claims 8-21 depend from claim 1. Thus, for the reasons discussed above, Applicants submit that at least by virtue of their dependency, claims 8-21 are patentable over the references cited by the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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